

JOURNAL OF THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY AND NATIONAL MUSEUM

15 August, 1976

No. 156

THE BIRDS OF TESO DISTRICT, UGANDA

By

Clive F. Mann

13a Margaret Road, London N 16, England

INTRODUCTION

Teso District, an area of approximately 140 000 km² in east-central Uganda, has been sadly neglected by ornithologists, and will probably remain so for some time to come. Almost all other parts of the country have been better covered. One reason for the lack of interest in the district, may be the geography which is comparatively uninteresting, but this is more than amply compensated for by its amiable indigenous inhabitants.

It is entirely low-lying country between 1000 m and 1200 m altitude, rising to 1367 m at one point in the south-west. However, inselbergs are a common feature of the landscape. The area, although lacking mountains and true forest, includes much wet land. Lakes Salisbury and Opeti are entirely within the district, as is a large part of Lake Kyoga. A chain of small lakes runs along the southern boundary. Running into the lakes, numerous small rivers, many seasonal, dissect the area. Where the rivers broaden out, extensive beds of *Cyperus papyrus* L. *Typha* and *Phragmites* may be formed.

Following Langdale-Brown, Osmaston & Wilson (1964), the district can be roughly divided botanically into four more-or-less equal sections, with the district headquarters, Soroti, at the centre.

North-west

Butyrospermum-Hyparrhenia savannah, and *Combretum-Acacia-Hyparrhenia* savannah, with tree heights up to 12 m; the dominant species of *Hyparrhenia* grass varying from one locality to another; small amounts of *Albizia-Combretum* woodland forming an open canopy at 5 to 10 m on light sandy loams; *Echinochloa* grasslands on clay soils along rivers; *Brachiaria-Hyparrhenia* grasslands on sandy loams over clay in seasonally water-logged valleys.

North-east

Mosaic of *Combretum-Acacia-Hyparrhenia* savannah in seasonally water-logged valleys, with much *Acacia-Setaria* on black calcareous clays, characteristic of a prolonged dry season; small amounts of *Echinochloa* grasslands; *Hyparrhenia* grass savannah, derived from *Butyrospermum* savannah between cultivation, with few remnant trees, and some *Butyrospermum* savannah still existing.

South-east

Mostly *Hyparrhenia* grass savannah derived from *Butyrospermum* savannah, with *Echinochloa* grasslands and also *Combretum-Acacia-Hyparrhenia* savannah in the extreme south-east with large areas of *Butyrospermum-Hyparrhenia*.

South-west

Echinochloa grasslands, with *Butyrospermum-Hyparrhena*, moist *Combretum* savannah, *Combretum-Hyparrhena*, undifferentiated deciduous thicket, and *Cyperus papyrus* swamp along lake edges with much *Typha* and *Phragmites* in places.

Dr. P. L. White kindly supplied rainfall figures for the years 1961-70, measured at Serere. The mean rainfall *per annum* measured in millimetres during that period was 1522.8, with extremes of 1226.1 in 1965 and 1839.0 in 1963.

TABLE

Means and extremes are given in millimetres and show the dryest month to be January, the wettest April.

MONTH	MEAN	LOWEST	HIGHEST
January	30.5	0.8	85.1
February	77.1	0.0	212.6
March	131.3	79.5	221.5
April	223.9	116.1	354.8
May	172.4	92.5	228.1
June	93.8	47.8	169.4
July	115.1	75.2	190.2
August	161.4	55.6	285.5
September	124.2	49.3	207.3
October	184.7	92.8	286.5
November	136.8	41.7	243.1
December	77.5	9.7	159.8

T. V. Fox collected birds quite extensively in the district in 1913. Most, if not all of his specimens are in the British Museum, and are reported, usually without details, in Jackson (1938).

Capt. C. R. S. Pitman collected in the north-eastern part of the district in October and November 1936, and again in June and July 1948. He has allowed me to use his manuscript notes, for which I am very grateful.

I was resident at Soroti, the district headquarters, from May 1965 to December 1967. During this period I travelled quite extensively in all but the north-western part of the district. I did no collecting and very little trapping. Also, as I was still rather a novice to the Ethiopian avifauna, I undoubtedly missed a number of species, particularly of the genera *Anthus*, *Cisticola* and *Mirafr*, and also some of the more skulking denizens of the extensive swamplands.

Comparing my own observations with those in the literature, it is obvious that considerable fluctuations occur in the populations of many species from year to year, particularly the water birds. Long term changes in the population appear to have occurred in some species which Jackson (1938) records as common, but I found uncommon or absent, and some species such as *Turdoides tenebrosus* have thrust south from the Sudan since the time of Jackson and Fox.

I have listed below the characteristic species of two of the most important and contrasting habitat types in the district. These are the *Acacia-Setaria* bush country of the north-east, identical with that found in southern Karamoja District to the north and east, and the *Cyperus papyrus-Typha* swamps characteristic of much of the lacustrine areas of central Uganda.

Nomenclature follows White (1960-1965) unless otherwise stated, but the order of species, genera, sub-families and families is alphabetical.

The Acacia-Setaria of the north-east

Characteristic birds, found not at all, or scarcely, elsewhere in Teso were:

Aquila rapax Tawny Eagle
Numida meleagris Helmeted Guinea-fowl
Streptopelia vinacea Vinaceous Dove
Tockus erythrorhynchus Red-billed Hornbill
T. jacksoni Jackson's Hornbill
Trachyphonus darnaudii d'Arnaud's Barbet
Eurocephalus anguitimens White-crowned Shrike
Prionops plumata Curly-crested Helmet Shrike
Empidonis semipartitus Silver Bird
Cisticola chiniana Rattling Cisticola
Sylvietta brachyura Crombec
Bubalornis albirostris Buffalo Weaver
Dinemellia dinemelli White-headed Buffalo Weaver
Plocepasser mahali Stripe-breasted Sparrow Weaver
Euplectes hordaceus Black-winged Red Bishop
Spreo superbus Superb Starling

The Cyperus papyrus-Typha swamps

Species associated with large open stretches of water inside the swamps are not included.

Balaeniceps rex Whale-headed Stork
Butorides striatus Green-backed Heron
Ixobrychus sturmii Dwarf Bittern
Gallinula chloropus Moorhen
G. angulata Lesser Moorhen
Vanellus crassirostris Long-toed Lapwing
Actophilornis africana Jacana
Microparra capensis Lesser Jacana
Muscicapa aquatica Swamp Flycatcher
Acrocephalus rufescens Greater Swamp Warbler
Cisticola galactotes Winding Cisticola
Euplectes axillaris Fan-tailed Widow-bird
E. orix Red Bishop
Ploceus castanops Northern Brown-throated Weaver
P. intermedius Masked Weaver
P. jacksoni Golden-backed Weaver

Seasonally, the swamps and swamp edges are inhabited by large numbers of Palearctic waders, variable numbers of Garganey *Anas querquedula*, and various local species of wildfowl.

A total of 330 species has been recorded in the district. The following were widespread and recorded commonly, but I have no observations of interest to make upon them. Palearctic migrants are indicated in bold type.

Podiceps ruficollis Little Grebe
Pelecanus rufescens Pink-backed Pelican
Anhinga rufa Darter
Phalacrocorax africanus Long-tailed Cormorant
Ardea melanocephala Black-headed Heron
Ardeola ibis Cattle Egret
Butorides striatus Green-backed Heron
Egretta alba Large Egret
E. garzetta Little Egret
Nycticorax nycticorax Night Heron
Anastomus lamelligerus Open-billed Stork
Ciconia ciconia White Stork
Leptoptilos crumeniferus Marabou
Scopus umbretta Hammerkop
Bostrychia hagedash Hadada
Threskiornis aethiopica Sacred Ibis
Alopochen aegyptiaca Egyptian Goose
Anas querquedula Garganey
Dendrocygna bicolor Fulvous Tree Duck
Buteo buteo Steppe Buzzard

Elanus caeruleus Black-shouldered Kite
Haliaeetus vocifer Fish Eagle
Lophaelus occipitalis Long-crested Hawk Eagle
Polyboroides typus Harrier Hawk
Terathopus ecaudatus Bataleur
Gyps africanus White-backed Vulture
G. rueppellii Rüppell's Griffon Vulture
Neophron monachus Hooded Vulture
Francolinus clappertoni Clapperton's Francolin
Fulica cristata Crested Coot
Charadrius hiaticula Ringed Plover
Vanellus senegallus Wattled Plover
V. spinosus Spur-winged Plover
Actophilornis africanus Jacana
Larus cirrocephalus Grey-headed Gull
Sterna leucoptera White-winged Black Tern
Himantopus himantopus Stilt
Calidris ferruginea Curlew Sandpiper
C. minuta Little Stint
Philomachus pugnax Ruff
Tringa glareola Wood Sandpiper
T. hypoleucos Common Sandpiper
T. ochropus Green Sandpiper
T. stagnatilis Marsh Sandpiper
Columba guinea Speckled Pigeon
Streptopelia decipiens Mourning Dove
S. semitorquata Red-eyed Dove
S. senegalensis Laughing Dove
Turtur afer Blue-spotted Wood Dove
T. chalcospilos Emerald-spotted Wood Dove
Treron australis Green Pigeon
Poicephalus meyeri Brown Parrot
Centropus monachus Blue-headed Coucal
C. senegalensis Senegal Coucal
C. superciliosus White-browed Coucal
Chrysococcyx caprius Didric Cuckoo
C. klaas Klaas's Cuckoo
Cuculus solitarius Red-chested Cuckoo
Corythaixoides leucogaster White-bellied Go-away-bird
Crinifer zonurus Eastern Grey Plantain Eater
Apus affinis Little Swift
A. apus Common Swift
A. caffer White-rumped Swift
Colius macrourus Blue-naped Mousebird
C. striatus Speckled Mousebird
Alcedo cristata Malachite Kingfisher
Geyx picta Pigmy Kingfisher
Halcyon chelicuti Striped Kingfisher
H. leucocephala Grey-headed Kingfisher
H. senegalensis Woodland Kingfisher
Ceryle rudis Pied Kingfisher
Coracias caudata Lilac-breasted Roller
Merops pusillus Little Bee-eater
Phoeniculus purpureus Green Wood Hoopoe
Lybius bidentatus Double-toothed Barbet
L. leucocephalus White-headed Barbet
Pogoniulus pusillus Red-fronted Tinker Bird
Campethera nubica Nubian Woodpecker
Dendropicos fuscescens Cardinal Woodpecker
Mesopicos goertae Grey Woodpecker
Thripas namaquus Bearded Woodpecker
Corvus albus Pied Crow
Prilostomus afer Piapiac
Dicrurus adsimilis Drongo
Estrilda astrild Waxbill
E. bengala Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu

Lagonosticta rubricata African Fire-finch
Vidua macroura Pin-tailed Whydah
Serinus atrogularis Yellow-rumped Seed-eater
S. mozambicus Yellow-fronted Canary
S. sulphuratus Brimstone Canary
Hirundo abyssinica Striped Swallow
H. angolensis Angola Swallow
H. daurica Red-rumped Swallow
H. rustica Swallow
H. senegalensis Mosque Swallow
Riparia cincta Banded Martin
R. riparia Sand Martin
Lanius excubitorius Grey-backed Fiscal
Laniarius barbarus Black-headed Gonolek
L. ferrugineus Tropical Boubou
Tchagra senegala Black-headed Bush Shrike
Anthus trivialis Tree Pipit
Macronyx croceus Yellow-throated Longclaw
Motacilla flava Yellow Wagtail
Terpsiphone viridis Paradise Flycatcher
Batis molitor Chin-spot Puff-back Flycatcher
Muscicapa adusta Dusky Flycatcher
Acrocephalus schoenobaenus Sedge Warbler
A. scirpaceus Reed Warbler
Camaroptera brachyura Grey-backed Camaroptera
Cisticola galactotes Winding Cisticola
C. natalensis Croaking Cisticola
Prinia subflava Tawny-flanked Prinia
Sylvia communis Whitethroat
Turdoides plebejus Brown Babbler
Cossypha heuglini White-browed Robin Chat
Monticola saxatilis Rock Thrush
Oenanthe isabellina Isabelline Wheatear
O. oenanthe Common Wheatear
Phoenicurus phoenicurus Redstart
Turdus pelios African Thrush
Nectarinia cuprea Copper Sunbird
N. mariquensis Mariqua Sunbird
N. senegalensis Scarlet-chested Sunbird
N. venusta Variable Sunbird
Oriolus larvatus Black-headed Oriole
Passer griseus Grey-headed Sparrow
Euplectes axillaris Fan-tailed Widow-bird
E. orix Red Bishop
Ploceus baglafecht Stuhlmann's Weaver
P. cucullatus Black-headed Weaver
P. intermedius Masked Weaver
Quelea cardinalis Cardinal Quelea
O. quelea Red-billed Quelea
Pycnonotus barbatus Dark-capped Bulbul
Buphagus erythrorhynchus Red-billed Oxpecker
Cinnyricinclus leucogaster Violet-backed Starling
Creatophora cinerea Wattled Starling
Lamprotornis caudatus Rüppell's Long-tailed Glossy Starling
L. chloropterus Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Phalacrocorax carbo Cormorant

Recorded only in May and June on large stretches of water. I have no records for other months.

Ardea cinerea Grey Heron

Seen occasionally, mostly single birds, at Awoja in May and June. Undoubtedly occurs on other large stretches of water.

Ardea goliath Goliath Heron

Present in small numbers by open water throughout the year. Immature birds usually appeared in June.

Ardea purpurea Purple Heron

A common resident in most marshy areas, subject to very noticeable fluctuations, caused presumably by arrivals of Palaearctic birds. The greatest numbers were found in September, with a lesser build-up in May.

Ardeola ralloides Squacco Heron

A common resident, showing marked fluctuations in numbers due no doubt to being augmented by Palaearctic birds. Numbers were about 10 times their normal monthly average in September, and 30 times in October and November.

Egretta intermedia Yellow-billed Egret

A widespread but not numerous resident, subject to increases in numbers in late September and October, which were particularly marked in 1966.

Ixobrychus minutus Little Bittern

A few resident pairs at Awoja. Numbers, probably augmented by Palaearctic birds, increasing in late October and early November. On 6 November 1966 30 + males were seen in a very small area. Moreau (1972) considers that most Purple Herons and Squacco Herons in the northern tropics in Africa in winter are Palaearctic birds. This would explain the influxes of those species, and possibly also the Little Bittern, although Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) could find only five records of the Palaearctic *minutus* from Kenya and one from Tanzania. However, the influxes of the Yellow-billed Egret are something of a mystery.

Ixobrychus sturmii Dwarf Bittern

Recorded at Awoja in most months of the year, usually singly. It was probably frequently missed due to its skulking habits, and doubtless occurred elsewhere.

Balaeniceps rex Whale-headed Stork

Singletons normally present at Awoja and no doubt present in other less accessible *Cyperus* swamps. I was told of a nest found in this locality in mid 1970, but the observer could not remember any details. Pitman (*in litt.*) states that it was, and possibly still is, common on Lake Salisbury; however, I failed to find it there.

Ciconia abdimii Abdim's Stork

A migrant usually appearing in November and departing by the end of May. Quite common at times, and occurring in flocks of up to 200. Often found near towns and villages.

Ephippiiorynchus senegalensis Saddle-billed Stork

A widespread resident, but everywhere uncommon. Not found in the vicinity of *Cyperus*.

Ibis ibis Yellow-billed Stork

Widespread and fairly common in open swamps. It was found to be most abundant from January to March.

Platalea alba African Spoonbill

Present at Awoja and on Lake Salisbury in small numbers in all months except June and July.

Plegadis falcinellus Glossy Ibis

Present at Awoja (and occasionally in other marshy areas) from early September to May, with maximum numbers usually in early October; presumably these were Palaearctic birds.

Anas sparsa Black Duck

Occasional pairs were recorded in more open stretches of swamp, not amongst *Cyperus*. This, an upland duck, is normally found on wooded rivers.

Aythya fuligula Tufted Duck

A male obtained on the River Bisina on 29 December 1912 is now in the British Museum. There are no other records.

Nettapus auritus Pigmy Goose

A resident in small numbers in areas of open water with covered banks, particularly at Awoja and parts of Lake Salisbury.

Plectropterus gambensis Spur-winged Goose

Most records are from Awoja where it was common for most of the year, often in flocks exceeding one hundred. Seen occasionally in small numbers in other areas but seemed to be absent from the district during July and August.

Sarkidiornis melanotos Knob-billed Goose

Common in all months at Awoja except November and December. Pitman (*in litt.*) says that it probably breeds in Teso.

Dendrocygna viduata White-faced Tree Duck

Common at Awoja, being particularly numerous from January to March. A nest with incubated eggs was found in June 1966.

Accipiter badius Shikra

Common in the Soroti area in *Butyrospermum* savannah and cultivation. Not found in the town, although it has adapted to an urban life in other parts of the country.

Accipiter minullus Little Sparrowhawk

The only record is of a female in *Butyrospermum* savannah near Soroti in June 1966.

Aquila rapax Tawny Eagle

Widespread, but uncommon, in *Acacia-Setaria*.

Kaupifalco monogrammicus Lizard Buzzard

One pair normally present around Soroti and occasionally seen in most parts of the district, usually in *Butyrospermum*, and occasionally in gardens.

Melierax poliopterus Pale Chanting Goshawk

A male was collected by Pitman at Nyeno on 16 October 1936 (MS notes). I did not record this species in Teso, but found it common in neighbouring Karamoja district.

Polemaetus bellicosus Martial Eagle

One seen taking a White-faced Tree Duck at Awoja on 9 October 1966, is the only record.

Circus beaudouini Beaudouin's Harrier Eagle

A male in adult plumage was collected on 15 February 1965 at Toroma by J. N. & E. J. van den Brink in a partly dried up river marsh (Voous 1966). There do not appear to be any other records of this species in Uganda.

Circus cinerascens Banded Harrier Eagle

Singletons in *Butyrospermum* and cultivated land near Soroti in August 1965, June 1966 and May 1967.

Circus cinereus Brown Harrier Eagle

One at Awoja in *Acacia-Setaria* and *Euphorbia* savannah on 1 May 1967, is the only record.

Circus aeruginosus Marsh Harrier

The resident subspecies, *ranivomus*, is augmented in October by the Palearctic *aeruginosus*. Found not only in the vicinity of water but also in *Hyparrhenia* grass savannah.

Circus macrourus Pale Harrier

Small numbers in open areas during the Palearctic winter.

Circus pygargus Montagu's Harrier

Although not definitely identified, some of the immature and female harriers seen may have been of this species].

Milvus migrans Yellow-billed Kite

Common near habitation, but few remaining during the wet season. Breeds November to January.

Pernis apivorus Honey Buzzard

One seen at Soroti on 21 November 1966.

Trigonoceps occipitalis White-headed Vulture

Occasionally seen, but not common, in pairs or singletons. Appears to be attracted to very small dead animals such as chickens and baby goats.

Pandion haliaetus Osprey

Twice recorded at Awoja in 1966; once in June and once in October.

Falco ardosiaceus Grey Kestrel

Found in open savannah with scattered trees. One pair resident at Soroti and another at Awoja.

Falco biarmicus Lanner

A pair resident on Soroti Rock during May and June 1966 were thought to be nesting. They disappeared after being disturbed by blasting. I did not record the species elsewhere in the district, but since it is common in Karamoja, it probably occurs in the drier areas of the north-eastern part of Teso.

Falco chicquera Red-necked Falcon

A pair resident at Soroti and another pair at Awoja. Always found in the vicinity of Fan Palms, *Borassus aethiopicum* Mart. and normally emerging at dusk to prey on Palm Swifts, *Cypsiurus parvus*. Pitman (*in litt.*) informs me that this species is now established in Kampala where Fan Palms are absent.

Falco cuvieri African Hobby

Occasionally recorded in a number of parts of the district, usually between May and December.

Falco naumanni Lesser Kestrel

Present in small flocks in open country from the end of October to early February, with a few records in March and April.

Falco tinnunculus Kestrel

A male of the African race *carlo* obtained in August (Jackson 1938).

Three seen together, and a male obtained, of the Palearctic nominate race, at Kakumali, L. Gedge, 18 November 1936 (Pitman MS notes). One or two seen in January and February 1967 were thought to belong to the nominate race (personal observation).

Falco subbuteo Hobby

Two at Soroti in early January 1967 (personal observation) and one at Lake Salisbury on 30 March 1971 (D. J. Pearson *in litt.*) are the only records.

Guttera edouardi Crested Guinea-fowl

Although this species is generally to be found in forests, I did occasionally identify it in *Combretum-Acacia-Hyparrhenia* savannah in the north-eastern part of the district.

Coturnix chinensis Blue Quail

Jackson (1938) records it from Soroti. I have a record of three at Soroti in June 1966, and one at Awoja in May 1965. I may have overlooked this species on other occasions.

Coturnix coturnix Quail

The only record I have is of a few near Soroti during May and June 1965.

Coturnix delegorguei Harlequin Quail

Jackson (1938) records it from Abela and 'Teso'. I found it occasionally at Soroti in May and June. It was probably more common and widespread than these records suggest, as it was sometimes abundant in Karamoja. However, I saw no evidence of its being trapped for food.

Francolinus icterorhynchus Heuglin's Francolin

Jackson (1938) records it from Wera. I can trace no other records.

Balearica regulorum Crowned Crane

A common breeding species, the young usually fledging in August. Some become quite tame and attach themselves to small villages.

Gallinula angulata Lesser Moorhen

A resident in small numbers at Awoja.

Gallinula chloropus Moorhen

A common resident, subject to influxes, of which a considerable one occurred at Awoja on 6 December 1966.

Limnecorax flavirostris Black Crake

Widespread and common in suitable areas. Downy young were recorded at Awoja in November.

Porphyrio alleni Allen's Gallinule

Common and always present at Awoja, but not as numerous as the following species. Sometimes found in very dense *Cyperus* beds.

Porphyrio porphyrio Purple Gallinule

Resident in many of the more open *Cyperus* swamps.

Porzana porzana Spotted Crake

One flushed from a cotton field at Awoja at the end of November 1967 is the only record.

Burhinus vermiculatus Water Thickknee

One to two at Awoja from May to July 1965. I have no other records.

Vanellus crassirostris Long-toed Lapwing

Resident in open swamps where water lilies abound.

Vanellus lugubris Senegal Plover

A specimen in the British Museum was collected on 21 April 1913 at Kajatanyanga. I did not record the species.

Cursorius chalcopterus Violet-tipped Courser

Fox collected a female at Akum, Lake Salisbury on 5 November 1913 which is now in the British Museum. I have no other records.

Microparra capensis Lesser Jacana

A resident in small numbers at Awoja. R. J. Wheater (*in litt.*) once observed it south of Serere.

Larus ridibundus Black-headed Gull

Two second year birds were seen at Lake Bisina (=L. Salisbury) on 31 December 1971 and 1 January 1972 (Rolfe & Pearson 1973).

Sterna hybrida Whiskered Tern

One at Awoja in mid September 1966 is the first record for Uganda (Mann 1971b). Another was seen at Lake Bisina on 6 November 1971 (Rolfe & Pearson 1973).

Sterna nilotica Gull-billed Tern

An uncommon bird, recorded most frequently at Awoja.

Rostratula benghalensis Painted Snipe

Fox collected a specimen of each sex at Kumi in September 1913 and these are now in the British Museum. I did not record this species, but as it is a skulking bird, I possibly missed it in the large areas of suitable marshland.

Gallinago media Great Snipe

A specimen dated 10 November 1913 was collected at Kumi by Fox.

Gallinago minima Jack Snipe.

As for the previous species, Fox is responsible for the only known record for the district, *viz.* one collected at Kumi on 24 November 1913, now in the British Museum. I may well have overlooked both this and the previous species.

Tringa nebularia Greenshank

This species passed through in October in small numbers, but was not recorded at other times.

Oena capensis Namaqua Dove

A widespread species becoming particularly common during the dry season when its numbers were presumably augmented by birds from the more arid northern areas of the country.

Streptopelia vinacea Vinaceous Dove

I found this species in the drier *Acacia* savannah of the north-eastern part of the district where it replaces the Mourning Dove, *S. decipiens*, the common member of the genus in other parts of the district. This species had a wider distribution previously, as it was recorded from Soroti by Jackson (1938). This may be connected with the recent spread of agriculture, to which *vinacea* may be less adaptable than *decipiens*.

Treron waalia Bruce's Green Pigeon

Jackson (1938) records it at Abela ('large numbers in fig trees, August') and near Belinia ('plentiful, April'). Whenever possible I examined all *Treron* carefully, but did not identify this species.

Agapornis pullaria Red-headed Lovebird

Fox collected this species at Serere. I did not see the species myself, and as it is a conspicuous species it must now be rare or extinct in the district.

Centropus toulou Black Coucal

A pair was collected by Fox near Bugondo on 16 May 1913. I did not see this species, but Pitman (*in litt.*) informs me that he has recorded it in the district.

Clamator glandarius Great Spotted Cuckoo

During my sojourn in the district I found this cuckoo numerous around Soroti from January to May and smaller numbers from October to December. I once recorded it in June. Pitman (*in litt.*) says that he was informed that it is resident at Ng'ora, and that a female was collected at Usuku by J. G. Williams in July. Other records I have traced are of one collected at Kumi in February by S. Clarke and one at Toroma in June by Fox. Both these specimens are in the British Museum.

Clamator jacobinus Black-and-White Cuckoo

I have only one record for the district, *viz.* one a few kilometres north of Soroti in early June 1966.

Clamator levaillantii Levaillant's Cuckoo

My only record is of one at Soroti in July 1965. However, Pitman (*in litt.*) thinks that it has been recorded at Serere laying in the nest of a species of *Turdoides*.

Tauraco leucolophus White-crested Turaco

Frequently encountered around Soroti in well-wooded savannah.

Bubo africanus Spotted Eagle-Owl

Jackson (1938) records a pair at Abela. I have no other records.

Glaucidium perlatum Pearl-spotted Owlet

Pitman (MS notes) records it as not uncommon at Ongino on 20 October 1936. I have no other records for the district.

Otus leucotis White-faced Scops Owl

Undoubtedly the most common owl in the district, particularly at Soroti and Awoja. I estimated that about a dozen pairs were resident at the former locality.

Van der Weyden (1973) describes the call of the nominate race in western Africa as 'cuck-cooo', contrasting with the call of *granti* from Tanzania southwards described as 'w-h-h-h-h-oo' or 'w-h-h-h-h-h-h-oo'. The calls of this species from Uganda and Kenya (nominate race) were unknown to him, but he suggests that they may be transitional. The only call I recorded the Teso birds as uttering was rather like a human imitation of an owl, which could be written 'w-h-oo', sometimes almost like a question.

Tyto alba Barn Owl

A nestling, almost ready for flight was brought to my house on 21 November 1966. It had been obtained locally. It flew away after about two weeks.

Macrodipteryx lonsipennis Standard-wing Nightjar

One or two were observed during February 1967 in gardens around Soroti. This species should be breeding at this time, and Pitman (*in litt.*) says that these records are the most southerly known to him at this time of the year.

Macrodipteryx vexillaris Pennant-wing Nightjar

Quite common, particularly in the Soroti area, from early June to early August. Usually associated with open areas and often killed on the roads.

Apus melba Alpine Swift

Recorded from Soroti in January, February and September. Subspecific identification was not possible.

Apus niansae/pallidus Nyanza/Pallid Swift

A small party was seen at Awoja on 22 October 1967.

Cypsiurus parvus Palm Swift

A widespread and common species always found associated with *Borassus* palms.

Bucorvus abyssinicus Abyssinian Ground Hornbill

A widespread species. A pair occupied the hollow trunk of a Banyan, *Ficus benghalensis*, at the end of 1965. They produced one young which flew in June 1966.

Tockus nasutus Grey Hornbill

A widespread and common species subject to considerable fluctuations in numbers. A particularly large influx occurred at the end of August 1966.

Coracias abyssinica Abyssinian Roller

A migrant from the north in varying numbers from October to May. I did not record it at all in the 1965-66 season. It appeared at Soroti on 18 October 1966, and from January to May 1967 was widespread in the district, but I did not record it afterwards. Stoneham (1926) records it at Dokolo on 8 October 1923 and Pitman (MS notes) records it as common at Inyeno on 23 October 1936.

Coracias garrulus European Roller

A common Palearctic migrant appearing in October and departing by March.

Merops albigollis White-throated Bee-eater

Only seen in the district during August when it was not uncommon.

Merops apiaster European Bee-eater

A Palearctic passage migrant recorded from Soroti in October and April only. J. Rolfe (*in litt.*) records it from Lake Salisbury in late March.

Merops superciliosus Blue-cheeked Bee-eater

I have recorded the nominate subspecies at Awoja in May. The Palearctic race *persicus* has been recorded at Opoti in February (British Museum); Lake Salisbury in late March (J. Rolfe *in litt.*); Awoja in September and October (personal observation).

Phoeniculus cyanomelas Scimitar-bill

Pitman (MS notes) found it common at Lake Gedge on 15 November 1936. I did not record it in the district.

Upupa epops Hoopoe

Either the Palearctic nominate race or the Ethiopian *waibeli* was common around Soroti from November to May. I have only one record of *africana* from Soroti, undated.

Lybius guifsohalito Black-billed Barbet

Jackson (1938.) records it from Lake Salisbury. A specimen in the British Museum dated 13 June 1913 from Toroma was probably collected by Fox. Pitman (MS notes) found it 'common' at Ongino on 19 October 1936. This species has possibly undergone a reduction in the district in this century as I observed it only twice, both times at Awoja, once in May and once in November 1966.

Lybius lacrymosus Spotted-flanked Barbet

An uncommon species occasionally recorded in various parts of the district.

Lybius leucomelas Red-fronted Barbet

Jackson (1938) mentions that Fox obtained this species in Teso, but I cannot trace the locality.

Pitman (MS notes) found it 'not uncommon in *Acacia*' at Ongino, Lake Salisbury, on 23 October 1936. I did not record this species in the district.

Pogoniulus chrysoconus Yellow-fronted Tinker-bird

Not common. I recorded it in the Soroti area in May, June and November. There is a specimen in the British Museum taken in August at Komolo.

Trachyphonus darnaudi D'Arnaud's Barbet

A common species in the drier *Acacia-Setaria* savannah of the north-eastern part of the district.

Indicator indicator Black-throated Honeyguide

I recorded it twice at Soroti, in May and December.

Prodotiscus insignis Cassin's Honeyguide

One at Awoja in thick bush on a low inselberg on 22 October 1967 is my only record.

Jynx torquilla Wryneck

In my garden at Soroti I observed one to two daily for much of February and March 1967. They spent a great deal of time creeping about in low bushes presumably hunting insects.

Dendrocopos obsoletus Brown-backed Woodpecker

Jackson (1938) records it from Teso, and there is a specimen in the British Museum from Bukedea dated 29 June 1913.

***Mirafra albicauda* Northern White-tailed Bush Lark**

There is a specimen in the British Museum obtained at Kumi on 6 April 1913. (My experience and knowledge of larks was very limited at the time, and I did not definitely identify any in the district.)

***Mirafra cantillans* Singing Bush Lark**

Two were obtained at Kumi by Fox in April 1913.

***Mirafra rufocinnamomea* Flappet Lark**

Jackson (1938) states that van Someren obtained this species at Soroti. I did not record it in the district, and since I was familiar with this species, it is unlikely that I overlooked it.

***Coracina pectoralis* White-breasted Cuckoo Shrike**

A female was obtained by Fox at Serere on 15 April 1913. I know of no other records.

***Corvus rhipidurus* Fan-tailed Raven**

There is a specimen from Abela in the British Museum dated 17 August 1913. I did not see this conspicuous species in the district, but it occurs to the east north-east and south-east in Karamoja, and at Mbale and Tororo. If it once occurred in the district it may have been forced out by the spread of agriculture.

***Serinus citrinelloides* African Citril**

A male collected on 31 May 1913 is in the British Museum.

***Serinus gularis* Streaky-headed Seed-Eater**

Fox collected one at Amuria on 26 July 1913.

***Delichon urbica* House Martin**

My only record of this uncommon migrant is of a small party at Mukuru on 2 November 1966. It is normally associated with higher altitudes than are found in the district.

***Hirundo semirufa* Rufous-chested Swallow**

There are two specimens in the British Museum obtained in the district. One was collected at Dakaberra on 19 August 1913, and one at Kumi on 21 June 1913. I did not identify it, possibly mistaking it for the ubiquitous *H. senegalensis*.

***Corvinella corvina* Yellow-billed Shrike**

Small parties frequently encountered in Soroti and north Teso in *Butyrospermum-Hyparrhenia* and *Combretum Acacia-Hyparrhenia* savannah.

***Lanius collurio* Red-backed Shrike**

An uncommon Palaearctic migrant, not recorded as frequently as the next species.

***Lanius isabellinus* Red-tailed Shrike**

Following Moreau (1972) I treat this as separate from *collurio* and *cristatus*. Another uncommon Palaearctic migrant, but more numerous than *collurio*.

***Lanius minor* Lesser Grey Shrike**

A few present during April, particularly around Soroti.

***Dryoscopus gambensis* Puff-back Shrike**

An uncommon species, recorded mostly at Soroti.

***Malaconotus sulfureopectus* Sulphur-breasted Bush Shrike**

I did not observe this species in the district, but Pitman (MS notes) records it as 'not uncommon' at Lake Gedge on 11 November 1936.

***Malaconotus blanchoti* Grey-headed Bush Shrike**

Singletons occasionally recorded in *Butyrospermum-Hyparrhenia* savannah in the Soroti area.

***Tehagra minuta* Blackcap Bush Shrike**

I have only one record, viz. one at Awoja in a *Cyperus* bed, November 1965. I may have overlooked this species, but it was obviously rare.

***Eurocephalus anguitimens* White-crowned Shrike**

A common species of the drier *Acacia-Setaria* savannah of the north-eastern part of the district.

***Prionops plumata* Curly-crested Helmet Shrike**

A party was seen just south of Iriti in *Acacia-Setaria* savannah in August 1967. Although this is the only record I have for the district, it was found to be quite common in neighbouring Karamoja.

***Anthus leucophrys* Plain-backed Pipit**

One was collected by Fox at Abela on 14 June 1913. I did not identify it in the district.

***Motacilla alba* White Wagtail/African Pied Wagtail**

The nominate race was an uncommon Palaearctic migrant. The Ethiopian *vidua* was a widespread and common resident.

***Batis minor* Black-headed Puff-back Flycatcher**

A pair at Awoja on 6 November 1966 is the only record.

***Platysteira cyanea* Wattle-eye**

Occasionally recorded in *Butyrospermum* woodland.

Empidonis semipartitus Silverbird

Widespread in the drier areas of the north east, particularly associated with *Acacia-Setaria* savannah.

Melaenornis edoloides Black Flycatcher

Quite common and widespread; fledged young appearing at Soroti in June.

Muscicapa aquatica Swamp Flycatcher

Common by edges of swamps, usually producing flying young by end of October.

Muscicapa striata Spotted Flycatcher

An uncommon migrant during the Palaearctic winter.

Cisticola brachyptera Siffling Cisticola

Lynes (1930) records it from Soroti, L. Oweru and Nyara in August, and Serere in April. I did not identify this species, but my experience of the genus was very limited at the time.

Cisticola chiniana Rattling Cisticola

A denizen of the *Acacia-Setaria* of the north-east, and not recorded elsewhere in the district.

Cisticola eximia Black-backed Cisticola

Lynes (*op.cit.*) records this species at Kumi in April, Lake Salisbury in July and Soroti in November. I did not record it.

Cisticola lateralis Whistling Cisticola

Widespread, but not numerous, in the district.

Cisticola robusta Stout Cisticola

A specimen in the British Museum was collected at Usuku in August 1913. I did not record it.

Cisticola troglodytes Foxy Cisticola

Lynes (*op.cit.*) records it from Kamchuru in February, and Abela, Kumi, Lake Salisbury and Usuku in August. I saw it frequently in the Soroti/Awoja area from May to September 1965, but on no other occasions.

Eminia lepida Grey-capped Warbler

Uncommon, being recorded only at Awoja and Lake Salisbury.

Hippolais icterina Icterine Warbler

One at Awoja on 6 November 1966 is the only record.

Hippolais languida Upcher's Warbler

One trapped and another seen on 24 March, two or three seen on 30 March, and one seen on 2 April 1972 (Rolfe & Pearson 1973).

Hippolais pallida Olivaceous Warbler

Two together at Awoja on 6 November 1966 (personal observation). A number seen and trapped at Lake Salisbury from 21 to 30 March 1971 (J. Rolfe, *in litt.*).

Phylloscopus collybita Chiffchaff

Two trapped and another seen on the southern edge of Lake Bisina on 19 December 1971. The trapped birds exhibited characteristics of the race *abietinus* (Rolfe & Pearson 1973).

Phylloscopus trochilus Willow Warbler

A common and widespread Palaearctic migrant. J. Rolfe (*in litt.*) observed 'large numbers' at Lake Salisbury on 30 March 1971. This fits in with very large numbers observed in various parts of Kenya, *viz.* Naivasha, Athi River and Central Nyanza during April 1971 (G. C. Backhurst and P. L. Britton, pers. comm., and personal observations).

Sphenoeacus mentalis Moustache Warbler

Common in long grass and swamp edge in the Soroti/Awoja area. It was not observed during July, August, November and December. Whether this was due to its being less conspicuous at those times or to a real absence, I could not ascertain.

Sylvia atricapilla Blackcap

Widespread, but not numerous, during the Palaearctic winter.

Sylvia nisoria Barred Warbler

Lake Bisina: two caught and two or more seen 30 March and one caught 28 November 1971 (Rolfe & Pearson 1973).

Sylvietta brachyura Crombec

An uncommon species usually associated with *Acacia* savannah.

Turdoides rubiginosus Rufous Chatterer

Pitman (MS notes) found this species common at Lake Gedge in November. I did not record it in Teso but found it common in neighbouring Karamoja.

Turdoides tenebrosus Dusky Babbler

Keith (1968) was the first to record this species in print for Uganda. However Pitman (*in litt.*) informs me that it nests at Serere (and at Lwampanga, Buganda; southern West Nile District; S.E. Acholi near Lango/Karamoja border). Thus it would appear to be quite widespread in the northern half of the country.

Cercotrichas leucophrys Red-backed Scrub Robin

One caught at Lake Salisbury on 24 March 1971 (J. Rolfe, *in litt.*) is the only record I have for the district.

Cichladusa guttata Spotted Morning Warbler

Pitman (MS notes) found it common at Lake Gedge in November and there is a specimen from Akum in the British Museum obtained in June. I did not record this species and since it is a noticeable one, I feel my negative observation is probably real. It may occur in the *Acacia-Setaria* savannah on the northern and eastern boundaries of the district.

Luscinia megarhynchos Nightingale

At least one bird per acre (=0.4 ha) present in early January 1972 at Lale, almost all departing by the end of March (Rolfe & Pearson 1973). These authors consider the birds to be probably of the nominate race. They also recorded it twice at Lake Bisina.

Myrmecocichla albifrons White-fronted Black Chat

There are specimens in the British Museum collected by Fox in June and July at Bukedea, Amuria and Nariam. It must now be uncommon in the district as I did not record it.

Oenanthe pleschanka Pied Wheatear

Widespread in the district from October to February (Mann 1971).

Saxicola rubetra Winchat

A regular Palearctic migrant in small numbers, particularly to the Awoja/Soroti area.

Nectarinia bifasciata Little Purple-banded Sunbird

Quite widespread, but not numerous, in the district.

Nectarinia erythroceria Red-chested Sunbird

A very uncommon species occasionally observed in various parts of the district. Normally associated with water.

Nectarinia pulchella Beautiful Sunbird

Occasionally seen at Awoja and Lake Salisbury but not elsewhere in the district.

Nectarinia rubescens Green-throated Sunbird

I identified a pair in my garden in Soroti on 21 November 1966. This is a forest edge species, and its occurrence in Teso must be very irregular.

Oriolus auratus African Golden Oriole

I have only one record, *viz.* two or three in Soroti in November 1966.

Oriolus oriolus Golden Oriole

An uncommon visitor to various parts of the district, (Jackson, 1938, Pitman MS notes, and personal observations).

Parus leucomelas Black Tit

One was collected at Ng'ora on 16 February 1913 and is now in the British Museum. I saw a party of three at Soroti in June 1966. It would appear to be a rare species in the district, but not so uncommon in neighbouring Lango District to the west.

Dinemellia dinemelli White-headed Buffalo Weaver

Common in the more arid *Acacia-Setaria* savannah areas of the north-eastern part of the district.

Amandava subflava Zebra Waxbill

My only record is of a pair at Awoja on 6 November 1966.

Estrilda troglodytes Black-rumped Waxbill

A specimen in the British Museum dated 1 April 1913 was obtained at Kumi. I may have overlooked this species.

Lagonosticta rara Black-bellied Waxbill

Jackson (1938.) states that Fox obtained this species in the district, without giving date or locality, and I have been unable to trace the specimen. I possibly overlooked it and have no records for the district.

Lagonosticta senegala Red-billed Fire-Finch

I only once recorded it in the district, at Soroti in October 1965. At other times I may have mistaken it for *rubricata*.

Lonchura cucullata Bronze Mannikin

Widespread and common. From the occurrence of juveniles it appears to breed at any time of the year.

Pytilia phoenicoptera Red-winged Pytilia

Jackson (1938) states that both he and Fox recorded it in Teso, but gives no further details. Pitman (*in litt.*) believes he collected the eggs of this species in Teso. I did not record it.

Passer iagoensis Rufous Sparrow

An uncommon species, being recorded from Lake Salisbury (Jackson 1938. and personal observation); Lake Gedge (Pitman, MS notes); Abela, Apetta and Usuku (British Museum collection).

Plocepasser mahali Stripe-breasted Sparrow Weaver

Occurs in the *Acacia-Setaria* of the northeast.

Amblyospiza albifrons Grosbeak Weaver

This is obviously a rare bird in the district despite the abundance of suitable marshy localities. The only record I have is of one at Awoja on 6 November 1966.

Euplectes afer Yellow-crowned Bishop

A few appeared at Awoja on 30 October 1966 and some displaying males were noted. On 6 November two males were seen but the species was not recorded subsequently. I can trace no other records.

Euplectes hordaceus Black-winged Red Bishop

Common in the northern and north-eastern areas in *Acacia-Setaria*.

Euplectes macrourus Yellow-mantled Widow Bird

Jackson (1938.) describes this species as 'plentiful in Lango and Teso'. I found it not at all numerous during the time I spent in the district, and assume therefore that it must have undergone a considerable reduction since Jackson's time. Pitman (*in litt.*) found it reasonably numerous in the semi-wetlands north of Soroti on the road to Lira.

Malimbus rubriceps Red-headed Weaver

Occasionally recorded in singles or pairs in well wooded areas, and sometimes in trees on the edge of cultivation. Pitman (MS notes) found it not uncommon at Ongino on 19 October 1936.

Ploceus castanops Northern Brown-throated Weaver

Not uncommon in the vicinity of *Cyperus papyrus* swamps.

Ploceus heuglini Heuglin's Masked Weaver

I occasionally identified this species in various parts of the district, but it was not common. Pitman (MS notes) collected a number of specimens at Nariam, Usuku and Katakwi in June and July 1948.

Ploceus jacksoni Golden-backed Weaver

A common species, usually breeding over or near water, in November.

Ploceus luteolus Little Weaver

An uncommon species, more frequently seen in the drier parts of the district.

Ploceus melanocephalus Yellow-backed Weaver

A common and widespread species recorded breeding in May and November.

Ploceus ocularis Spectacled Weaver

Widespread, but only numerous in the vicinity of Lake Salisbury.

Ploceus spekeoides Fox's Weaver

I found it fairly common in the north-eastern sector of the district during the rains. There are specimens collected at Usuku and Nariam during July and August 1913, in the British Museum. Pitman (MS notes) collected a number at Usuku, Nariam and Katakwi in June and July 1949. Pitman (*in litt.*) informs me that it breeds in the district in July and August.

Ploceus superciliosus Compact Weaver

An uncommon species occasionally seen in the Awoja/Soroti area.

Hypochera centralis Purple Indigo-bird

Here I follow the classification of Hall & Moreau (1970). I found Indigo-birds widespread in the district but was unable to identify them further with any certainty. A specimen in the British Museum from Tiriri collected by Fox on 23 May 1913 is labelled *H. ultramarina purpurascens* Reichenow. P.R. Colston has kindly examined this and informs me (*in litt.*) that it is *H. (chalybeata) centralis*. I assume that others in the district belong to this form.

Lamprolornis chalcurus Bronze-tailed Starling

In the British Museum there are two specimens collected in the district, *viz.* one from Labori, August 1913, and one from Kadunguru, July 1913. I did not record it, but may have mistaken it for the common *L. chloropterus*.

Lamprolornis chalybeus Blue-eared Glossy Starling

A specimen in the British Museum was taken in June at Abela. I did not record this species, but once again may have mistaken it for *chloropterus*.

Spreo superbus Superb Starling

Common in the north-eastern sector of the district.

Zosterops senegalensis Yellow White-eye

I did not record the species in the district, but there is a specimen in the British Museum taken near Akum in November.

GAZETTEER

ABELA
AGU
AKUM
AMURIA
APETTA
ATIRIRI

1°54'N 33°56'E
1°28'N 33°42'E
1°36'N 34°03'E
2°01'N 33°38'E
1°37'N 33°10'E
1°53'N 33°27'E

AWOJA	1°40'N 33°44'E
BISINA, LAKE	ca. 1°37'- 33°45'-
BUGONDO	1°44'N 34°07'E
BUKEDEA	1°37'N 33°17'E
DAKABERRA	1°21'N 34°03'E
DOKOLO	1°54'N 33°37'E
GEDGE, LAKE	2°00'N 33°39'E
GLOLU HILL	1°39'N 34°10'E
INYENO	at KOMOROJO
IRIRI	1°30'N 34°00'E
KABERAMAIDO	2°05'N 34°12'E
KADUNGURU	1°47'N 33°10'E
KAJATANYANGA	1°31'N 33°12'E
KAKUMALI	not located
KATAKWI	on LAKE GEDGE
KOMOLO	1°55'N 33°57'E
KOMOROJO	1°52'N 33°49'E
KUMCHURU	1°25'N 33°39'E
KUMI	not located
KYOGA, LAKE	1°29'N 33°56'E
LABORI	Large, diffuse lake in central Uganda
LALE	1°28'N 33°15'E
LIRA (Lango District)	1°41'N 33°28'E
LWAMPANGA (Mengo District)	2°15'N 32°54'E
MBALE (Bugisu District)	1°30'N 32°30'E
MUKURU	1°05'N 34°10'E
NARIAM	1°26'N 23°21'E
NG'ARIAM	1°53'N 34°08'E
NG'ORA	= NARIAM
NYARA	1°27'N 33°46'E
NYENO	2°00'N 33°19'E
OLD NARIAM	= INYENO
ONGINO	1°57'N 34°06'E
OPETA, LAKE	= INYENO
OPOTI	= LAKE GEDGE
OWERA, LAKE	1°21'N 33°58'E
SALISBURY, LAKE	not located
SERERE	= LAKE BISINA
SIROKO RIVER	1°31'N 33°29'E
SIRONKO RIVER	ca. 1°16'-1°30'N 34°17'E
SOROTI	= SIROKO RIVER
TIRIRI	1°43'N 33°37'E
TOROMA	= ATIRIRI
TORORO (Bukedi District)	1°45'N 33°57'E
USUKU	0°42'N 34°11'E
WERA	2°01'N 33°58'E
	1°52'N 33°45'E

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

D. J. Pearson and J. C. Rolfe have allowed me to use various unpublished notes. G. C. Backhurst, P. L. Britton and P. R. Colston helped in tracing records and examining skins. G. C. Backhurst also read and criticised the penultimate draft. I am extremely grateful to Capt. C. R. S. Pitman who allowed me access to his manuscript notes, and has helpfully criticised this work throughout. I am also indebted to my wife, Rani, who did most of my typing.

SUMMARY

The botany and topography of Teso District, Uganda, are briefly described. The characteristic birds of two habitats of the district are listed. The more interesting bird records from the district are included in a systematic list. A gazetteer is added.

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(Received 4 February 1974)

Printing costs of this paper have been met from the Myles North Memorial Fund to which the East Africa Natural History Society and National Museums of Kenya acknowledge their gratitude.

Published by The East Africa Natural History Society, Box 44486, Nairobi, Kenya and
printed by Kenya Litho Ltd., Box 40775, Changamwe Road, Nairobi.